



Lent 1 - Sunday March 9th, 2025

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

You who live in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,
will say to the Lord,

**"My refuge and my fortress:
My God in whom I trust."**

Psalms 91:1-2

Let us worship God

Light the candle - Christ is with us.

Acknowledging



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

The Ancient of Days breathed life into this land
and her peoples. From time beyond our
reckoning the *(please name the people on whose
land you gather)* People, the Traditional
Custodians, have blessed this place through their
law and customs, their care and life. We pay
respects to their Elders and leaders past and
present, and pray for the future of their
communities. May we walk gently and
respectfully on this Land.

Singing - O for a thousand tongues to sing TiS 210

OR: Praise and thanksgiving Father we offer TiS 627

OR: Praise with joy the world's creator TiS 179

Prayer

Creator God,
like those people who entered the promised
land, we too have a land flowing with milk and
honey, again and again we are amazed by the
variety of animals and plants that inhabit it.

Thank you, help us to care for the land,
and all who inhabit it,
and never forget that
it is your gift to us.



Forgive us when we forget and take all the
resources you provide for granted.

Jesus was tempted at the end of a time of fasting
and deprivation and withstood it.

Forgive us when we are well fed and comfortable
and still fail to withstand temptation.

Forgive us our selfishness, pride, greed, anger,
forgetfulness and how we take for granted all
that you provide for us.

Thank you, that in your love and grace, you
forgive us again and again, **Amen.**

Passing the peace

May the Peace of God dwell with you:
and also with you.

Listening

Read: Romans 10:8b-13 &
Luke 4:1-13

For these words of faith
and for Jesus the Word
Thanks be to God.

Reflecting - Rev. Sandra Houghton

Forty is a significant number in the Scriptures. As
Barbara Brown Taylor explained, "Israel spent 40
years in the wilderness learning to trust the Lord.
Elijah spent 40 days there before hearing the still,
small voice of God on the same mountain where
Moses spent 40 days listening to God give the
law. There was also Luke's story about Jesus' own
40 days in the wilderness during which he was
sorely tested by the devil. It was hard. It was
awful. It was necessary, if only for the story.
Those of us who believe it have proof that it is
humanly possible to remain loyal to God."

In the number 40 we are reminded of all the
occasions where God guided and helped people
through the worst that life could throw at them,
and never left them.



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Lent was an invention of the early church whose leaders were concerned that many in their congregations were losing sight of what was important in their faith including the centrality of the Easter events.

So, they decided that it would be helpful if Christians prepared for Easter by being invited to join in a time of strict observance and discipline in order to promote renewal for their souls. The word 'Lent' means 'spring'. Lent took place in the season of spring in the Northern hemisphere, but there was also a connotation of a springtime for the soul – if you like, spring cleaning and making new their faith. When the church leaders decided to call Christians to join in this season of Lent, it was hardly surprising then that they fixed a period of forty days for this time of prayer, self-denial and renewal of faith influenced in particular by the story of the temptations of Jesus.

We are told that Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness fasting and praying after he was baptised by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. This was a time when he was being tested and made ready for his ministry.

The wilderness region of Israel is truly dry, lifeless and uninviting, but it was into this rugged and demanding landscape that the Spirit led Jesus. We struggle to see how Jesus could have endured such privations and then, at the end of 40 days, have the willpower and faith to resist the temptations that were put before him. But Jesus was not seduced by the wiles of the devil. Out of the depths of his faith, his knowledge of the Scriptures, his determination to be true to his calling, and through the power of the Holy Spirit that was within him, Jesus was able remain faithful and not give into temptation.

But we are not nearly as successful at resisting temptation in our lives. We may not need to resist turning stones into bread or leaping off pinnacles, but how often have we been greedy or jealous or sneaky? And how often have we stretched our values and our principles to allow ourselves to do something that we shouldn't

have done? And how often do we fail to pray or fail to listen to God or are too busy to read the Scriptures, too busy for Bible study, too busy to visit the ones who are lonely or lost, or too mean to share what we have?

Lent gives us an opportunity for some spring-cleaning of our souls and our lives by prayer, reflection, and self-examination. We can then confront our temptations, seek forgiveness, renewal, guidance, and strength, and get back in touch with God.

We may find it difficult to face up to our failings and admit them. It's often even harder to repent and begin anew. But we need to remember the good news that was present in the first verse of the Gospel reading – Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus did not face the desert alone. We, also, are filled with the Holy Spirit. God gave us the Holy Spirit at our baptism. The Holy Spirit is there when we call. The Spirit doesn't leave us when the going gets tough. The Spirit goes with us into the desert, helps us confront the hard times, and supports us as we turn again to seek to live the life that God calls us to live. God promises us forgiveness, God promises us strength and guidance, and God promises to never let go of us.

Lent gives us an opportunity to get back into, or to begin for the first time, undertaking the practices of discipleship that support and uphold us in our faith journey:- prayer, reflection, study of the Scriptures, generosity, self-discipline including fasting, and trusting in the promises of God. The forty days of Lent can truly be a time of blessing and new life.

The Season of Lent is an invitation to 40 days of renewal and preparation to take in the Good News of Easter knowing that at Easter God's love is triumphant over sin and death, and that in Christ, our mortality is overcome and we are promised eternal life. Amen.



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Singing - Love will be our Lenten calling

TiS 684

OR: Forty days and forty nights TiS 591

OR: See ye first the kingdom of God TiS 745

OR: When he was baptised in Jordan TiS 252

Offering

As people of God

We bring ourselves,

all that we have and who we are.

Bless our offerings

Use us and them as you will.

Amen.

Notices

Here's an invitation to join the online Lenten Journey group, using the *Day is Done* resource (<https://victas.uca.org.au/weekly-worship/> under Lent 2025) - Tuesday evenings, 7-8pm on Zoom, from March 11th to April 15th. Contact Jennie revjenniegordon@gmail.com

Prayers for World & Community

Jesus answered:

"It is written, 'one does not live by bread alone' "

Let us pray for all those who live thinking only of their needs, their comfort, their enjoyment of life that they may learn there is more to life.

Let us pray for those who do not have bread or the essentials of life. Loving God, show us how we may make life in this world fairer, inspire our leaders to show compassion, may those with power and wealth have their eyes opened to the needs of all people.

Time of Quiet

Jesus answered:

"It is written, 'worship the Lord your God and serve only him' "

Gracious God, may we live our whole life in worship and so demonstrate your wonder and greatness to others. As we serve, may others see the way to serve and the joy there is in service.

We pray for those who seek to be worshipped and who exercise power over others.

We pray for those who suffer under harsh regimes, unfair laws and injustice.

We pray for those without freedom of choice, because of their deeds, their lack of resources, their age, health or incapacity

We pray for those grieving loss of a loved one, a means of support, their freedom or their situation in life, we ask your comfort.

Time of Quiet

Jesus answered:

"Do not put the Lord your God to the test"

Loving God, grant us humility, accepting all you give us, rejoicing in the unconditional love you offer. May we love you and our neighbour and respond to all life throws us with grace and generosity.

We say together the prayer Jesus taught us:

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours, now and forever. Amen.



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Singing - Holy Spirit, go before us TiS 420

OR: Guide me O thou great Redeemer TiS 569

OR: O Jesus I have promised TiS 595

Blessing

Those who love me, I will deliver
I will protect those who know my name.
When they call me,
I will answer them;
I will be with them in trouble;
I will rescue them and honour them.
With long life I will satisfy them
And show them my salvation.

Be blessed in the name of the Creator, Redeemer
and Sustainer. **Amen.**

Reflection: Rev. Sandra Houghton
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